648 179 [423] makes the welfare aspects of "Arab Socialism" meaningful, but the Bedouins of al-Qasr feel that they are already practicing "Socialists."

The Bedouins feel that the programs of the government are insufficient: the desert is extra harsh and aid should compensate for this. On the other hand, the Egyptians who administer the aid programs claim that the Bedouins do not differentiate between "giving cooperation" and "receiving aid." [181] Agricultural advisers complain that the Bedouins are lazy. One agronomist whose job it was to teach the Bedouins how to cultivate the olive tree said that they did not want to learn: "They want us to plant the trees, water them and care for them, harvest the olives, and then they will take them to the market and sell them!" This statement is typical. The [186] Bedouins reply: "The Egyptians did not teach us how to grow the olive. Our fathers planted the olive here long before they came into the desert." The Bedouins feel that the Egyptians should follow their advice concerning the use and control of water in the desert; that if they did the olive [186] would flourish and life would be easier. "The Egyptians," they say, "are lazy and cannot keep up with our requests for more seedlings. They cannot furnish us with what we need to improve our lives. All we hear is: 'tomorrow, tomorrow'!"

[241] The Bedouins do not understand the methods of modern hydrology and agronomy. They see no reason for the experimenta-

648 177 •241 tions and innovations in agriculture which the Egyptians bring to the desert. On the other hand, the Bedouins do not get the modern materials which they need to increase the production of their land. This is most serious when it comes to heavy farm machinery, such as tractors, and the spare parts to keep it functioning. Furthermore, seldom did a man in al-Qasr receive the number of olive seedlings that he requested. This invariably led to bitterness between Bedouins and Egyptians.

648 177 Most of the Bedouins believe that the desert is a difficult (wihsha) life, and they favor change. They want to know, for instance, why an American would leave home to live such a life.

[114] At a Governor's Council meeting which I attended, the Bedouin representative from al-Qasr did not protest government interference. He complained that the Governor was not furnishing the materials and facilities which the Bedouin needed if he was to become "modern" and "educated." The Bedouins' major complaint about the Egyptians is not that they are trying to change the desert, but that they are not changing it fast enough!

1: Obermeyer E-5 (1964-1965) 1969 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
'Aishaibat

CHAPTER II

THE ECOLOGY AND ECONOMY OF THE AL-QASR AREA

Changing Patterns of Land Use

131 Al-Qasr is located in the Northwestern Coastal Zone, a relatively fertile littoral region forming the northern edge of the Egyptian Western Desert. Extending from Alexandria to Sallum on the Libyan border, the Zone is some 500 kilometers in length and reaches south into the desert some 20 to 50 134 kilometers. A deep soil deposit and a relatively high average 132 rainfall of about 15 centimeters (20 centimeters of rain would • 241 be considered "high") permit limited agriculture in this region.

133 Due to the drainage pattern of the coastal area there is a fair supply of underground water. The rain percolates [172] down through coastal sand dunes and is trapped in man-made underground galleries dating from Roman times. Farther into 312 the desert, cisterns, which also date from Roman times, catch the rains draining off the Libyan plateau to the south. This plateau and the catchment area form the southern boundary of the greater al-Qasr settlement area (see Figure 4). The General Desert Development Authority, an agency of the government, estimates that there are about 3,000 of these

173 land along the coast: "This land was free, and the man who
[36] planted on it owned it. We call this (method of claiming land)
425 wad'a-l-id ("laying on of the hand," i.e. seizure). There was
[423] plenty of freedom in those days. A man could farm or keep animals." Planting and caring for the land is not novel to the Bedouins of al-Qasr.

423 The Bedouins claim that the pattern of land distribution
425 established during the time of Abu Mahjuba prevails today.
656 Further, they say that these rules will never change, no matter
[178] what laws come out of Cairo: "Land registration can mean nothing where the tribes are concerned, for no Bedouin would be willing to take the land of another Bedouin. The government forces us to register our land so that it can be stated in the newspaper that they are giving the Bedouins land."

*613 The relationship between ecology and lineage territory
423 is not striking, such as in the case of the Cyrenaican Bedouins
182 of Libya (Peters 1960). In most cases, lineage territories run on a north-south line cross-cutting the coastal garden and southern pastoral zones. Hence, lineage territories are, generally, ecologically similar rather than contrasted. However,
*613 there are exceptions. 'Ailit Shraif lineage (see Figure 3a
423 below), at the western end of al-Qasr's 'izba sector, settled
182 there "because of the abundance of underground water in this
•241 area: the ground is rocky here and the water comes out fresh
[312] like the Nile." Their founder, Sayyid Shraif, "specialized"
[361]

*613 423 182 •241 [312] in farming, and he found this land "good for raising mint and vegetables." To the southeast of the 'izba, the lineages of Lazumi and Ma'fas found the land suitable for barley and grazing. This area is rain-fed. There are no wells and so vegetable crops are not possible here. The members of these lineages say that their ancestors were "real" Bedouins in Cyrenaica, and did not wish to become farmers in Egypt. It *613 182 184 241 is interesting to note that the Lazumi and Ma'fas are the richest lineages in all of al-Qasr. They were, perhaps, better able to maintain the traditional style of life which all of the Bedouins claim is "the best." But all Bedouins of al-Qasr depend to some degree upon horticulture or arboriculture. [231] And most families own a few sheep or goats. Both Lazumi and Ma'fas garden in their coastal sections, and Shraif members own sheep.

656 423 Land registration has a history in the Western Desert. The government attempted it a number of times, but with little success until 1959 when the General Desert Development Organization (GDDO) undertook its program of land reclamation. But the 361 342 178 Bedouins were settled long before this. In al-Qasr, the Bedouins began to erect permanent stone dwellings on the land about the time of the First World War. In the Matruh area, elder informants agree that before 1914 the Bedouins lived in tents outside the 361 648 town area. When the British came, they began to move into town. Many of the Bedouins built houses in Matruh between the years

433 233 183 241 [461] [556] 472 433 241 434 177

The Bedouin of al-Qasr idealize the life of the pastoralist. It is a dominant theme in their culture. Gardening and arboriculture are perceived by the Bedouins as involving long hours of work, anxiety over waiting for profits, and complex market operations. They understand the logic and operation of the sheep market. Sheep are a store of value, a source of security, and a medium of exchange. In a good year of rain, a man can reap a good crop of barley, and buy more sheep against the inevitable bad year to come. While most Bedouins are, in one way or another, involved with the modern cash economy which ties al-Qasr to Marsa Matruh, the Bedouins who go into the production of cash crops on a large scale are those who can afford the risk of failure and who can survive the meager profits of the initial stage. These are the men who can adjust their world view from that of the pastoralist to that of the entrepreneur. There are only a few of these men in al-Qasr but they dominate the economy. Through them, most of the Bedouins of al-Qasr are linked to the national economy.

Land and Economy

433 177 178

The period between 1960 and 1964 was one of significant economic change in al-Qasr. Dependence upon farming increased while pastoralist activities became less important. In the past, none of the Bedouins now living in al-Qasr were "nomads;" even my oldest informants had moved only once or twice to

433 plant a small crop or graze their animals on the land of
197 relatives. In terms of economic specialty, the economy of
198 al-Qasr has for some time been a mixed one. Traditionally,
433 dependence was upon animal products with relatively few
197 vegetables being grown in the 'izba sector of the coast and
198 the barley sector to the south. Now, over one-half of the
• 241 registered land in al-Qasr is aboricultural land, and much
311 more land is given over to the growing of vegetables than in the past. Correspondingly, the barley land has decreased. The Bedouins still use barley primarily for fodder but much of this comes from the government. With the shift to olive arboriculture and government aid in the form of flour and grain, naturally the barley crop has become less crucial. But it remains indispensable for many Bedouins during this transitional period. All Bedouins of al-Qasr are concerned with securing a good livlihood. They express this idea in the term ma'isha simha, and, as I have noted, they identify it with the garden coastal sector of al-Qasr. The security of a cash economy and participation in the national economy
433 have been realized by the Bedouins. I have no figures on the
241 amount of land registered prior to 1960, but, as of 1964,
311 al-Qasr consisted of 2,000 registered acres. Over one-half
434 of this land is in the garden area of al-Qasr, and is planted with orchards. All of this land represents cash crops. Planted in between the orchards are vegetable gardens. These gardens

These gardens furnish staples for local consumption and more cash crops for the Marsa Matruh market. Matruh is dependent upon these vegetable goods from al-Qasr, to the extent that the Governor has forbidden the Bedouins to truck their goods to the higher priced market in Alexandria.

The success of arboriculture in al-Qasr has been the result of a well-organized reclamation program in this area by the government. The relatively good supply of fresh water and the proximity of a large market town has made al-Qasr an atypical case in the government's attempt to transform the desert pastoral economy. Since 1960, the government's program has met with a great deal of success. Such results have, of course, induced the Bedouins of al-Qasr to accept change, and have further enhanced the future of the program. The figures below show, as of 1964, the plant distribution of orchards in the 'izba of al-Qasr, and indicate the measure of success attained by the governmental reclamation program.

The environmental conditions of al-Qasr are particularly well-suited for the olive tree: the olive has been the basis of the economic transformation of al-Qasr. The Bedouins tend to play down the government's role in developing olive arboriculture in the al-Qasr area. But before 1960, only the very wealthy men could afford to deal in the olive market, since it involves a great initial financial risk. Hence, prior to the entry of the government's program, there were 2,743 olive trees

244 all times of the day in the desert. The Bedouins had most of these crops before the government came to al-Qasr. Since
[177] 1960, however, the Bedouins have been planting new crops such as okra, squash, cucumber, tomato, spinach and melon. All of these are plants adopted from the Nile Valley. Vegetables
244 312 are grown by means of irrigation or dry-farming. Where there is no well water, an individual will cultivate without irrigation. In this case, crops are planted in the spring after the rains. This method is called ba'ali. Irrigation makes it possible for a man to obtain four crops during the year, but usually, the Bedouin is more concerned with security than with profit. Therefore, most Bedouins try for one good crop
244 and allow a portion of the land to remain fallow. Land which has been planted all year around needs at least one year's rest before it can be replanted. The vegetable harvest usually takes place in July or August.

•241 The government has attempted to introduce other crops
177 into al-Qasr which have failed. Failure is related to two
312 main problems in al-Qasr: salination arising from the short supply of fresh water, and the Bedouin's misunderstanding of
245 the techniques of successful irrigation farming. Figs have
177 not been successful in al-Qasr due to the nature of the soil itself. The almond tree has succumbed to the climate of al-
[132] Qasr. This tree blooms in April during the khamsin season, fifty days of hot, dry winds blowing in from the Sahara. The

233 with the movement toward a cash economy, this has changed.
178
[465] The shepherd receives 8 to 10 piasters for each head of sheep which he tends. The Bedouins who have taken up farming can spare none of their family for sheep-herding chores. If he
[497] can afford it, during the dry season, a Bedouin may ship his sheep to the Nile Valley by train at 12 piasters per head. But the government will not accept sheep for shipment unless they are accompanied by a shepherd. The role of shepherd has become a very specialized one in the al-Qasr area. Few
[554] of the al-Qasr Bedouins are shepherds, and the role is reserved for the poorer men without land.

241 Plowing in the garden area is done by hand. Usually,
407 the plow is pulled by a donkey but occasionally, if one can
492 afford it, a camel or a horse will be used. A man and his
[462] sons handle all of the agricultural chores with the exception
178 of the winnowing process which the women do. Traditionally,
241 barley was threshed by camels plodding on it. The Bedouins say
492 that this is the best way because the soft feet of the camel do not crush the kernel. Now, however, very few men can afford
[405] a camel. Threshing is done with a heavy wooden sled pulled by
241 a donkey or a horse. Tractors, when available, are used for
407 agricultural plowing in the southern barley zone. This zone,
434 during the year 1963, also became important for raising water-
433 melons (batiikh), and this product figures to be an excellent cash crop for al-Qasr. Melons and barley can bring high profits

241 when planted in large quantities. The southern zone of al-Qasr
407 is best suited for these crops, and the tractor is necessary
434 for a successful crop.
433

407 Tractors are rented through the cooperative society.
474 Local cooperative officers are responsible for seeing that all
[427] members share in the use of the tractor. But, in fact, officers and their closer relatives monopolize the tractors. The gov-
[654] ernment has allotted to the al-Qasr cooperative five tractors. They feel that it would jeopardize the whole program of economic reform if they were to dictate the way in which the tractors
407 are to be used. Consequently, the tractor, like the rations
619 of foodstuffs, has become a pawn in tribal power plays. In
474 one case, not in al-Qasr, a tractor-driver who was a member of the 'Ali Abyad tribe insisted that members of the 'Ali Ahmar tribe pay him a 50 piaster "tip" to have their fields plowed. Because of situations such as these, most Bedouins prefer that cooperative membership coincide with local group membership. It is better, they say, if the 'Aishaibat of al-Qasr have their own cooperative because they know how to handle problems among themselves. The government, during this transitional period, seems to agree.

407 One reason that tractors are monopolized by a small group is that there are not enough of the machines to handle the plowing. Of the five tractors in al-Qasr, seldom were more than two working simultaneously. Often, this was a result of

407 the lack of spare parts. Three of the tractors were Russian-built, and two were Egyptian made. The Bedouins say that the Russian tractors are the better.

407 241 654 [132] In 1964, the Western Desert received its heaviest rainfall since 1947. To take advantage of this, local government officials of the reclamation project requested an additional fifty tractors for plowing on the coastal zone. They received only six additional tractors. In that year, the thirty-nine tractors used in the entire Western Desert were able to plow 15,240 acres of land. During this period of economic change, 731 233 [654] a bad barley crop causes a fodder shortage for the animals, and seldom is the aid program able to compensate for this. [166] Consequently, there is a need to ship sheep to the Nile Valley, or to seek permission to take them to the pastures of Cyrenaica. Both situations create tremendous difficulties for both the Bedouins and the government. A third alternative for the [432] [435] Bedouin is to buy barley on the black-market. In doing this, he must pay six times the normal cost of grain, and risk reprisals.

177 657 Prior to 1960, change in al-Qasr might be characterized as a steady and endogenous process of sedentarization. It had been taking place for about a century and a half. Exogenous change, social and economic, may be identified with the desire of the government to reclaim land in al-Qasr for agricultural use, and to integrate the Bedouin into the national economy.

423 society. Private ownership of land with sovereign rights
* [613] over it is now the normal practice in al-Qasr. Rights are
[178] held by the family head, the shaib. If the family head is
[596] deceased, land tenure rights are held jointly by the sons.

In the area beyond the plateau, in the extreme
[184] south of al-Qasr, land rights to grazing and water still are
* [613] associated with lineages. But here agriculture is impossible.
• [241] The type of rights over the land varies with the method by
which it is exploited. The southern and coastal sections of
[433] al-Qasr represent the old and the new, the pastoral traditional
mode of production and the modern agricultural cash economy.
[233] But, as noted, of the total population only a few Bedouins
are actually engaged in pastoralist activities. Hence, tribal
tenure rights, in general, are not overly important at this
time. Not too long ago they were, and many cases in the recent
[671] history of Bedouin customary law relate to conflicts over land
and water in the southern region. The Bedouins say that
[178] traditionally no lineage could use the pasturage or water of
* [613] another without some agreement, usually of long standing,
[233] made beforehand. Now, they say, permission is not needed.
[675] In the old days, these agreements were made between lineage
representatives, not individuals per se. Today, the grass
178 and water in the southern zone are claimed, though not in a
423 legal sense, by the families using them: the rights of
usufruct over the land are closer to rights of sovereignty

1: Obermeyer E-5 (1964-1965) 1969 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
'Aishaibat

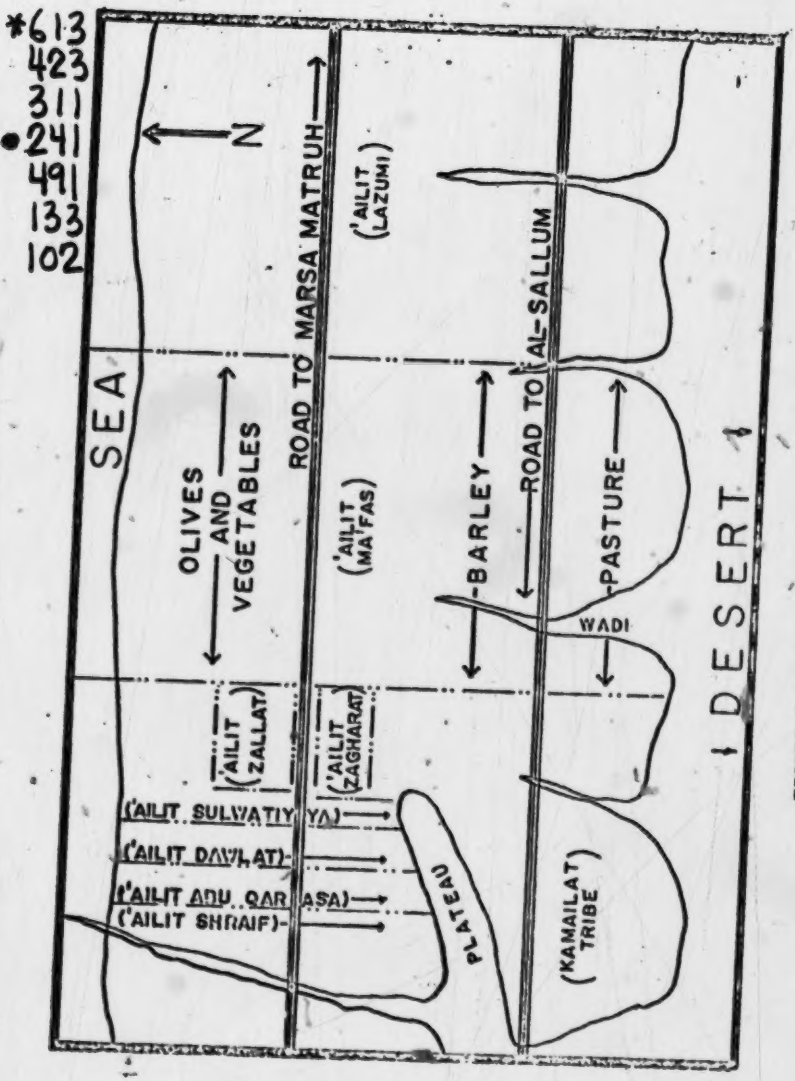


FIGURE 3a. LINEAGE TERRITORIES OF AL-QASR.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

slaves, kitchens, and wells. The oasis depression was studded with date palms and just outside the main entrance to the village were small irrigated gardens and wind-mills. The people had to use the brackish water for ordinary purposes, but sufficient fresh water for tea was obtained from infrequent showers by hollowing out cisterns in the rocks at the top of the western escarpment of the oasis.

The Grand Sanusi was not only a very learned man and a writer of distinction but also a bibliophile with a fine library of some 8,000 volumes,[1] mostly works on Islamic law and jurisprudence, mysticism, philosophy, history, koranic exegesis, poetry, and astronomy and astrology. Round him were many men capable of making good use of this substantial library. Indeed, it would have been difficult to have found anywhere in the Islamic world at that time, outside Cairo, a circle of better scholars. Poetry was one of the arts most cultivated at the oasis and I have been told by Arabs that it reached a high level of excellence. Shaikh Muhammad 'Uthman, himself a poet, wrote that at Jaghbub one meets 'literary men of distinction, whose writings eclipse those of the poets of Iraq and of Andalousia'.[2]

The whole community at Jaghbub may have numbered round about 1,000, but it is not possible to make more than a guess at the figure. As the oasis produces little except dates, the supply problem must have been considerable, and we know that the Grand Sanusi kept herds of camels to the west of the oasis, where there is scrub grazing, and at al-'Azziyyat, to transport supplies from the coast. The community lived very largely on the surplus revenues, mostly goods in kind, sent annually by all the zawiyas of Cyrenaica.

The community was centred round the University. It was, in fact, almost purely a University society, and its importance as such in the history of the Sanusiya Order is very considerable. Here, under his personal supervision and the supervision of his disciples, far from worldly distractions, the Grand Sanusi was able to train the future leaders of the Order. The Shaikhs of the lodges of the Order were appointed by him from among his intimate circle of disciples, many of whom had followed him

[1] Duveyrier, op. cit., p. 24; Muhammad bin 'Uthman, op. cit., p. 88; Sir Richard Burton, *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to al-Madinah and Meccah* (Memorial Edition), 1893, vol. ii, pp. 24–5.

[2] Op. cit., p. 88.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

and the insufficiency of the fall elsewhere. It follows that only on the plateau can there be forest, and only there is a settled and purely agricultural way of life possible; and it was there and on the coastal fringe that in ancient and modern times European colonists settled.

The rains in Cyrenaica fall only in winter, from October to April. In the absence of irrigation the planting season is thus clearly delimited. So is the grazing season to the south of the plateau, for in summer the grasses wither and the wells dry up, compelling shepherds to drive their flocks northwards to the plateau, thus producing the kind of seasonal nomadism known as transhumance. The variation in total rainfall from year to year and the distribution of its fall over the winter months are of the utmost importance for agriculturalists in Cyrenaica. There is still some obscurity, but it is an observed fact that every few years in Cyrenaica there is a year in which the fall of rain is insufficient, or too badly distributed, to raise an adequate crop. In a mixed economy this fact must have given an overwhelming bias towards pastoralism.

The water supplies of the plateau, which depend entirely on rainfall, are sufficient for the needs of the Bedouin and their flocks. The clayey soils are, however, very exacting and running spring water is rare, being for the most part restricted to the triangle Darna–Slanta–al-Haniya. On the western part of the plateau water is conserved in cisterns and wells and on the maritime and *barqa* plains, in the Sirtica and Marmarica, and generally to the south of the plateau, in wells.

The distribution of vegetation in Cyrenaica follows variation in degree of precipitation. Where there is much rain there is forest. Where there is little rain there is steppe. Where there is no rain there is desert. The forest is thick but mainly squat and of very limited extension. An Italian estimate[1] of its distribution is shown on the accompanying map. It is predominantly Mediterranean in type, the juniper and the lentisk being the two commonest trees of the country. Forest ceases a few miles to the south of the high watershed of the plateau and gives way to steppe. The well-known route Tariq 'Aziza is generally regarded as the dividing line between the two kinds

[1] Dott. Giovanni Manzoni, 'Memorie sui boschi della Cirenaica', *Notiziario Economico della Cirenaica*, 1929.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

137 [134] of country. The whitish soils of the steppe support worts and other scrub bushes and some drought-resisting trees in the beds of wadis and they are well covered with annual and perennial grasses and other plants which yield excellent pasturage in the [233] springtime. However, except in the Wadi al-Mra, where camels can be kept the year round, there is little grazing beyond the line Msus–Bir Tinjidhir–Bir Hakaim.

233 137 The Bedouin of the forest area are essentially a goat people, though they also keep many sheep and cattle, and it is mostly through the medium of the goat that the vast natural wealth of the forests of Cyrenaica is transformed into human wealth. The animal is hardy and frugal, and has the great merit of preferring tree and shrub to grass and of being a catholic feeder. Just as the forest would be useless to the Bedouin without the goat so the much vaster stretches of steppe would be useless to them without the sheep and camel which turn its grasses and 233 scrub into food. Thus Cyrenaica is fundamentally a pastoral [181] country, primarily a country of sheep farming, and its people, as they say themselves, have the hearts of shepherds and not of peasants. While agriculture and pastoralism are both practised, the bias of nature and tradition is towards animal husbandry, by which the rich vegetation of the country is turned into milk, butter, meat, wool, hides, and draught and transport.

II

13 221 233 In Cyrenaica stand always contrasted the mountain and the plain, the forest and the steppe, the red soils and the white, the region of goats and cows and the region of sheep and camels, settled life and nomadism.

221 233 True nomadism is very rare. A few Fawakhir, Minifa, Huta, and other tribal fragments herd only camels, or if they possess other animals keep them with kinsmen near the plateau, and can therefore wander pretty well where they please. They may be found anywhere between the Nile, Fazzan, and the Sudan. Their spirit is that of an Aulad 'Ali tribesman who said to me: 'We call no place our home. It is wherever there is grass and water.' Semi-nomads are numerous. Those with land on the [241] plateau cultivate there, then graze southwards, and return again to the plateau in the dry season to water their flocks.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

*175 *795 793 is not to be built till the zawiya is completed. There will be builders and carpenters among the Brothers and all that is required of the tribal Shaikhs is selection of the site and supervision of the work. He points out to them that the work is for their benefit, in that they and their sons will receive in the zawiya an education, especially in the Koran and in the laws of Islam, and will be able to worship there. The Grand Sanusi then cites passages from the Koran and the *Hadith* commending religious benefactions. Finally he prays God to assist those engaged in the building and those who have made themselves responsible for the upkeep of the zawiya. God helps those who help others. A man reaps what he sows.

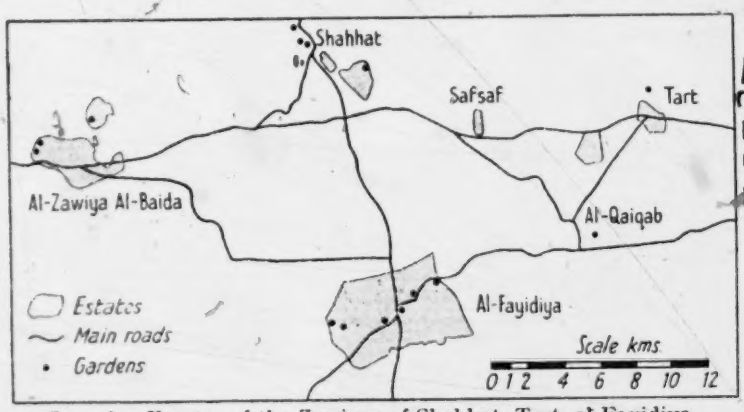
*795 346 Some of the Cyrenaican lodges were larger than others but they all had the same features, a straggling warren of stone buildings comprising a mosque, schoolrooms, guest-rooms, apartments for the Shaikh of the zawiya and his family, rooms for teachers and pupils, and houses for the Brothers, clients, and servants, and their families. Many had small gardens near- [241] by and the local cemetery was usually adjacent to a lodge. [764] Jaghbub, where several hundred persons lived, was the largest of such communities. The ruins of Dariyana and al-'Azziyyat [792] are also extensive and must have housed several hundred persons, but the average lodge probably housed only some fifty to a hundred persons, including wives and children, though there were often *Marabtin* families attached to the zawiya living nearby, sometimes in caves dating from classical times. The importance of a lodge was not to be estimated so much by the number of its occupants as by its tribal position and the number of its Bedouin adherents.

*795 793 425 The Shaikh of a new zawiya would point out to the local tribesmen that he and his companions had no means of supporting themselves or of maintaining the zawiya. The various sections nearby then gave to the lodge the lands adjoining it, this estate surrounding a lodge being known as its *haram*. On the plateau the lodges were generously endowed with arable, in the steppe with wells, and in the oases with date-palms and springs. Later, further gifts of arable, wells, springs, and date-palms, or part use of these, would sometimes be made, especially when there was a dispute between two sections about ownership of property and neither would give way to the other,

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

for they might then settle the matter by surrendering their claims to the zawiya.[1] Another way in which a lodge obtained rights in land was by asking permission of its owners to sow it. Constant repetition of this favour eventually gave the zawiya rights of use in it in perpetuity.

The tribesmen also assisted the Shaikh of the lodge in the cultivation of the lands, though most of the work was done by



Sanusiya Estates of the Zawiyas of Shahhat, Tart, al-Fayidiya, and al-Zawiya al-Baida.

the zawiya community itself. At sowing time the Shaikh would pitch his tent near the area to be cultivated and prepare a communal meal, taking with him some sacks of rice for the purpose. The local Bedouin then came with their draught animals and sowed and ploughed for a couple of days on behalf of the zawiya. The same procedure took place at harvest time. Besides gifts of land and voluntary service in cultivating, the Bedouin were expected to pay a tithe to the lodge at harvest time and after lambing. No doubt many of them paid annual dues but it is unlikely that any strict record was kept or that payment could have been enforced had they been averse to making it.

That it was expected that the Bedouin might promise services more readily than perform them is suggested by an interesting document, dated 1307 A.H., found by the Italians at the

[1] Savarese, op. cit., p. 193.

6: Peters E-5 (1948-1950) 1965 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
Cyrenaica

sorts of petty ways, listen to his grumbles about his agnates, interfere on his behalf in petty camp quarrels, shield him from the disciplinarian father and guard his property interests against the predatory father's brother; if the mother's brother dies without heirs, the sister's son can reasonably expect at least a share of his wealth. When the mother's brother is a member of a different corporate group, a sister's son cannot possibly expect to inherit from him in any circumstance.

The mother's brother may reside in a camp too distant to be much effective direct help in day-to-day living. His relative remoteness gives the relationship other possible opportunities, however. Rainfall in the semi-desert area of Cyrenaica is highly variable, both from year to year, and from place to place in any given year. As a result this shallow saucer of a depression may have sufficient rain to supply both the water needs of animals and crops, while an area a few miles distant will have inadequate water supplies for either. The mother's brother-sister's son link can mean water for animals and a crop of barley for both when, in successive years, the resources of one area or the other are inadequate.

The differences in the relations between men and their mother's brother do not end with a characterisation of their antipodal forms. The demographic structure of a group may be such that one man may have a number of mother's brothers, another only one; one man may have to share with several brothers, another may be an only son. Complications of this sort determine the precise relationships between men, but however intricate these may be, each corporate group has its matrilateral links with a group occupying a slightly different ecological area, and it also has a plurality of matrilateral connections within it. Further, if a direct connection is not available to any particular individual he can use an indirect link (e.g. father's mother's brother or mother's mother's brother) to satisfy his needs.

The Preference for Males

Thus far, the family and the social matrix in which it is embedded has been discussed in general terms, most particularly in reference to several selected sets of relationships. I wish now to place these relationships in a more specific setting with a brief discussion of the composition of a small camp of a group inhabiting the arid areas of central Cyrenaica. When the Bedouin give their views on the structure of the family in Cyrenaica they speak of it as consisting of a pair of spouses and about ten children, mainly males. The emphasis on males is not mere sentiment, overwhelmingly though it favours them against females. Additional males in a family increase the productive possibilities of a family in the sense that more herdsmen become available and larger ploughing commitments can be undertaken; an increase in the number of females has small effect on production since they are precluded from any direct participation in these activities. Both sexes, ranging in age from about seven years to mature adulthood, are necessary if a family

462 424 them or any innate aptitude for them; this insistence is an index of the jealousy with which she is prepared to guard her rights. Each right derived from this or that small task is an extension of her control over the male.

462 424 252 The force and significance of this control is, perhaps, best seen in a woman's right to cook. At marriage a woman must have at least the minimum of cooking utensils, and one of the rights a man acquires in a woman is that she cooks for him. This is something a man cannot do for himself. [593] Therefore, when a man ill-treats his wife or threatens her with divorce, she can retaliate by refusing to cook, or leave the tent altogether to return to her father. A man bereft of this service is in a very sorry plight indeed. The legal dominance of the male, seemingly autocratic, is reduced at every point by the control a woman exercises through her exclusive right to perform tasks. The limits to the area of her coercive powers are significant. 562 They are confined almost wholly to domestic relationships. Legally, women suffer such disabilities that they are almost of the status of minors; in reality, their day-to-day living is far from intolerable b[illegible] they are able to control males over a wide field of relationships.

462 424 231 Men, excluded in the main from domestic duties around the tent, perform tasks to which their legal rights are tied. While women have access to wells for water used by human beings, the transport of larger quantities of water over longer distances, requiring the use of camels, is a task which falls to the men. Watering of animals is done by men. Only they can slaughter the animals for food. The meat of an animal slaughtered by a woman is not "free," in a ritual sense, for human consumption. In an extremity only, a woman can, in effect, kill an animal, but the knife which cuts its throat must be held in a male hand, even if it is the hand of a very small boy. 462 The exploitation of the land is also the male prerogative. They [424] plough and sow the grain; incidental help may be provided by wives working alongside their husbands during the early part of reaping, but the main [241] reaping is done entirely by men. Transportation of grain to the mounds is also carried out by men, and it is they only who have access to the grain stores when quantities are withdrawn for family use. Sheep-shearing is [236] carried out entirely by males,[10] the fleeces are stacked by them and the [432] distribution and sales of these is directed by the male head of the tent.

Additional to these major tasks which males undertake are a number of minor ones. Men sew strips of cotton together to make clothes for both sexes. They also make rope of grass, albeit in a desultory sort of way, by [334] twisting together the strands between the palms of the hands. A number of other tasks fall to the men by virtue of the fact that the sexes are separated [342] in the tent by a divider of blanket material, which may be taken down when only members of the elementary family are about, but which is put

[461] [533] [538] [831] [10] This work is reserved for the younger men and takes the form of a festival during which lewd songs are sung and poems with obscene themes or references are recited loudly and within the hearing of elders, in a manner not dissimilar to the behaviour of bachelors at a wedding.